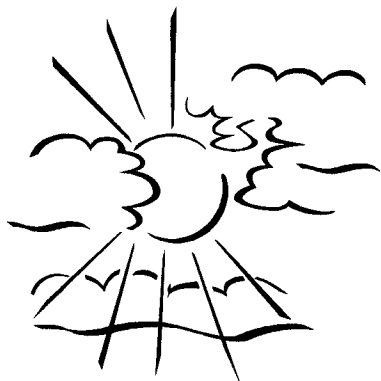


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Tuesday, May 16, 2006

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DETROIT FREE PRESS EDITORIAL

Food Stamp Issue

Weigh people's needs in possible distribution change

May 16, 2006

An idea proposed by small retailers and wholesalers in Michigan to spread out the now-monthly distribution of food stamps has obvious benefits, but also some potential drawbacks that must be considered before the state switches systems.

True enough, distributing benefits twice a month, roughly two weeks apart, would even out grocery business, reducing checkout lines at the start of the month and making it easier for retailers to staff and stock their stores. Now, more than 1 million low-income people in Michigan get their food stamps in the first nine days of the month, creating a boom-and-bust cycle for the stores that serve them.

Getting the benefits in two doses also might help food stamp recipients better budget their purchases and avoid empty cupboards at the end of the month.

But the state can't ignore potential problems the new system could create for consumers who don't have reliable transportation and live far from discount supermarkets. In Detroit, for example, one in three residents lives in poverty and one in four households doesn't have a car. The only stores within walking distance of many of them are small and pricey. It makes sense for those folks to rent a cab or borrow a car once a month and run out to a larger, cheaper store to stock up. Having to make two such trips a month instead of one would be less convenient -- and more expensive.

The state should carefully evaluate the distribution proposal from the Associated Food and Petroleum Dealers of Michigan. In the end, the benefits of distributing food stamps more often may outweigh the drawbacks. But, before making a decision, Michigan should assess it based on the needs of the people served by the program.

Staggering food-stamp payments could aid many

In areas where there are high concentrations of poverty, most store owners do not have to look at the calendar to know when it is the first of the month. A steady flow of customers bearing food-stamp cards signals the issuance of another month of benefits.

That means bigger demand for fresh foods and a balancing act on the part of store owners to ensure their supplies meet customers' demands for items. Any imbalance either leaves shoppers unable to get what they want or stores with inventories of fresh fruits and vegetables that they cannot sell before they start to perish.

It is an often-frustrating situation played out monthly. That is why some small retailers and wholesalers in Michigan are urging the state to alter the way the food-stamp program is administered. They would like to see the state spread out distribution to help eliminate great fluctuations in customer traffic. Such fluctuations make it difficult to keep stores adequately stocked and staffed.

The Michigan Food Policy Council, a state advisory group, took up the issue on Monday as a possible way to boost the availability of fresh food in low-income areas.

We think this is an idea worth pursuing both for the benefit of store owners as well as food-stamp recipients. In addition to helping ensure that stores are better stocked, staggered payments would help ensure adequate choices for food-stamp shoppers throughout the month.

Under current policy, Michigan distributes food-stamp benefits to about 512,000 households during the first nine days of the month. Eight states still allocate their benefits on a single day, while other states range from three days to 22 days.

While keeping shelves properly stocked may not be as big an issue for large, chain-owned supermarkets that have access to a bigger supply network, it's important to note that there are only *two* such markets in the entire city of Detroit, where more than one-third of residents live below the federal poverty line. Most residents have to depend on small, family-owned grocery stores, which have the toughest time trying to deal with fluctuations in customers.

The National Grocers Association supports staggered issuance of benefits as a way "to provide some relief both for the consumer and the retailer."

We agree. It makes much more sense to distribute benefits throughout the course of the month.

Originally published May 16, 2006

Tuesday, May 16, 2006

Study: Spread out food stamps

Brad Heath / The Detroit News

A state task force recommended Monday that Michigan spread out its food stamp payments to unclog urban grocery stores.

The recommendation was among a handful of steps the Michigan Food Policy Council advocated to improve the availability of fresh food in low-income areas. Gov. Jennifer Granholm created the council last year; its recommendations will be part of a broad report on Michigan's food supply due in October. The recommendations are not binding.

About 470,000 households in Michigan receive food stamp payments at the beginning of each month. As a result, grocers say, their stores are especially crowded during the first half of the month, and it's more difficult to keep the shelves adequately stocked. The council proposed spreading payments out over the entire month.

The council also recommended that the state use its economic development tools to help stores in under-served areas, including providing financial assistance.

The changes would have to be approved by Granholm's administration.

Food stamp changes?

State retailers seek more flexible distribution of benefits

BY SARAH KARUSH
The Associated Press

DETROIT - With the flip of each calendar page, the empty aisles of K&G Food Mart are flooded with shoppers. But as the weeks wear on, the traffic slows to a trickle.

The cycle, familiar to many inner-city grocers, has a simple explanation: The start of the month is when people get their food stamps.

A group of small retailers and wholesalers in Michigan is asking for a change in the way the state administers the federal assistance program. The merchants say they hope that spreading out food-stamp distributions can eliminate such swings in customer traffic, which make it difficult to keep stores adequately staffed and stocked, and wreak havoc on suppliers' delivery schedules.

On Monday, the Michigan Food Policy Council, a state advisory body, is scheduled to vote on the issue as part of a set of recommendations to Gov. Jennifer Granholm on ways to increase the number of stores selling fresh food in low-income areas.

As she wheeled her cart through K&G on a recent morning, food stamp recipient Tamika Ealy, 22, said she does most of her food shopping at the beginning of the month.

"The food tends to be fresher at the beginning of the month," she said.

While store owners say their food is always fresh, they acknowledge that the selection is better on days when they are expecting more sales. With customer purchasing so skewed, they say they have no choice but to adjust their merchandise.

In Detroit, where more than a third of residents live below the federal poverty line, healthy food at reasonable prices can be hard to find. There is no outlet of Wal-Mart Stores Inc. or similar discounters, and most supermarket chains have abandoned the city. Only Farmer Jack, a subsidiary of the Great Atlantic & Pacific Tea Co., remains, with two supermarkets within city limits.

Helping stores

The problem: Grocers in Michigan's poor neighborhoods say wide fluctuations in customer traffic make it difficult to run their stores. They are swamped after people receive their food stamps on the first nine days of the month, but business slows down considerably as the days pass.

One solution: The Michigan Food Policy Council is scheduled Monday to consider a draft recommendation to the governor that calls for food stamp payments to be spread out over the entire month.

Another solution: The Associated Food and Petroleum Dealers of Michigan wants the state to divvy up each recipient's benefits into two separate payments per month.

As a result, small, mostly family-owned grocery stores provide a valuable service, and their concerns need to be taken seriously, said Jane Marshall, executive director of the Food Bank Council of Michigan and a member of the Food Policy Council.

"You've got to have grocery stores to make the food stamp program work," she said.

Nationally, the food stamp program served 23.9 million people in 2004, with an average monthly benefit of about \$86 per person and about \$200 per household.

In Michigan, all 512,000 households - 1.1 million individuals - on food stamps receive them on one of the first nine days of the month. The funds, no longer issued as paper coupons, are transferred electronically onto each recipient's Michigan Bridge Card, used like a debit card.

Most states similarly stagger distribution, though eight states issue everyone's benefits on the first of the month, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Of those that stagger, the

In Michigan, all 512,000 households - 1.1 million individuals - on food stamps receive them on one of the first nine days of the month.

number of days varies from three in Connecticut to 22 in Missouri.

Tom Wenning, general counsel of the National Grocers Association, said staggered issuance took hold as a way "to provide some relief both for the consumer and the retailer."

But many Detroit retailers say the nine-day spread is not enough. The Associated Food and Petroleum Dealers of Michigan is asking the state to divide each recipient's food stamps into two payments per month - something federal law allows for, but no states currently do. The group says such a system would both ease the situation for businesses and help families budget more effectively.

"If we could get a twice-monthly distribution it would help us maintain the product in the store," said Najib Atisha, who owns two supermarkets in Detroit and estimates that more than 25 percent of his revenue comes from food stamps.

It would also help store owners with staffing levels, Atisha added. "You can't just hire somebody for 10 days and then lay them off," he said.

Greg Person, a meat cutter at K&G, said it would help him too. As it is now, there isn't enough work for him at the end of the month, and he ends up leaving early. His boss would pay him, but "I don't want to milk the clock," he said.

Advocates for the poor say splitting benefits into two payments could create hardships,

particularly for people who live far from a store and can't afford to get there often. But some say they would support staggering the distribution of benefits over the whole month as a way to help grocers. That approach is advocated in the draft recommendation that the Food Policy Council will consider Monday.

Maureen Sorbet, a spokeswoman for the Michigan Department of Human Services, which handles the distribution of food stamps, said the department is evaluating the retailers' proposal, but is concerned about the potential costs. Even if a new system isn't more expensive to run, it would involve initial transition costs, such as a spike in customer service calls from confused recipients, she said.

Gary Davis, Michigan sales manager for Prairie Farms Dairy, said the sales swings impact his business as well, forcing him to adjust the number of trucks on his urban routes. The company spends more on drivers' pay at the beginning of the month, and the fluctuations make it difficult to plan efficient routes that don't waste gas, he said.

Davis, who sits on the food dealers' board and has been a strong advocate of twice-monthly payments, said staggering the distributions over the whole month would solve the problems for retailers and wholesalers. But, he said, the group believes a twice-monthly distribution for each recipient would be better for families.

Davis said many customers tend to load up on groceries, including perishables, at the start of the month. Then, at the end of the month, little remains, he said.

Mark Kassa, whose family owns K&G and four other supermarkets in and around Detroit, said he often gives away food to customers who ask for help at the end of the month. He said he also sees a spike in shoplifting and muggings outside the store during that time.

But Ealy, the food stamp recipient, said it's important to her to be able to spend her benefits when she wants to. "I'd rather just have it all up front," she said.

Changes planned for food stamps

Panel suggests spacing them out

ASSOCIATED PRESS

LANSING — A state advisory body passed a recommendation on Monday to stagger food stamp distribution over a wider period of time to ease problems faced by retailers in low-income areas.

The Michigan Food Policy Council is to include the recommendation in a report to Gov. Jennifer Granholm in the

fall.

Michigan distributes food stamps during the first nine days of each month. Retailers say that results in the majority of purchases occurring at the beginning of the month, leading to problems with inventory and staffing.

The Associated Food and Petroleum Dealers of Michigan has been pushing for changes to the system on behalf of many of its members who operate stores in Detroit's poor neighborhoods.

As part of its recommendations for improving access to fresh food, the Food Policy Council said the state should spread out food stamp distribution throughout the month.

In addition, the council said the Michigan Economic Development Corp. should initiate pilot feasibility studies for urban grocery store development in five underserved communities.

MySpace mom claims pot use

The mother of teen who had liaison describes herself on Web site as 'firey, fiesty, fun loving, party girl.'

By George Hunter / The Detroit News
Saturday, May 13, 2006

HARRISON TOWNSHIP -- The case of a liaison between a 13-year-old girl and an older man that started on MySpace.com took a new twist Friday when authorities said the child's mother posted her own Web profile describing her life of drinking and pot smoking.

Macomb County Sheriff Mark Hackel said the girl's mother has her own Web site under the name "Tammy Tokes" that is so disturbing that he is asking the state Department of Human Services to investigate.

The mother's posting shows a photo of her drinking a margarita, and bragging about how she gets high on marijuana after her daughter leaves for school.

"We have some serious concerns about this," Hackel said. "I don't know if there have been any actual laws broken, but I think this Web site might be of interest" to the Department of Human Services.

He declined to say what he wants the state to probe. The Department of Human Services is the state agency that investigates reports of suspected child abuse and neglect.

The mother's profile identifies her as a 34-year-old whose "average day consists of a morning tokes after sending my 13 yr old daughter to school. After another grueling day outside in the Michigan weather, i run home to be greeted by at least one of my closest friends and a fresh packed bowl (a reference to smoking marijuana from a pipe)."

She calls herself a "firey, fiesty, fun loving, party girl at heart. I love the simple things in life like long walks on a beach somewhere, and romantic nights."

She also offers more of a look at her life: "After dinner i head off to bed, ALONE. so if you want to know anymore you'll just have to ask." She then gives her e-mail address.

Her daughter also posted a message on her mother's site in January: "hey all you boy better treat my mom right other wise im gunna kick your (expletive) so blah," the girl wrote. "hey mommy welcome to mspace. love your daughter."

A 25-year-old Hammond, Ind., man drove to Harrison Township on Tuesday to pick up the 13-year-old after he met her through her MySpace profile, on which the girl claims to be 18. He was stopped near Jackson after authorities in Michigan issued an Amber Alert for the girl.

The man was released from custody Thursday after prosecutors determined he did not have sex with the girl. If he had engaged in sex, he could have been charged with statutory rape. The fact that the mother makes a reference to her 13-year-old daughter raises questions about whether the Indiana man knew the girl was 13, Hackel said.

"This raises a lot of potential issues," Hackel said. "We are going to look through both computers to see if at any time the girl told (the Indiana man) she was 13 years old. We also want to know what the mother knew about what her daughter was doing."

The girl was placed on a tether and charged Wednesday in Macomb County Juvenile Court with "home truancy," which prosecutors say is similar to running away from home.

Home truancy is considered a "status offense," which is an offense where a crime is not committed, but where behavior of a minor warrants court action.

The girl was released Wednesday to the custody of her mother. She was ordered to remain on a tether until her pretrial hearing, which is scheduled for 2:30 p.m. May 25, and she must refrain from using the Internet.

Man held in teen's Web seduction

Youth: He got me into porn business

May 16, 2006

BY BEN SCHMITT
FREE PRESS STAFF WRITER

In a case drawing national attention, the Michigan attorney general charged a Detroit man Monday with sexually assaulting a 14-year-old boy and luring him into an online child-porn business.

The man, Kenneth Gourlay, 28, refused to answer a congressional committee's questions last month about whether he had molested the teen, now 19. The teen created a national stir when he testified that he was enticed into the Internet sex trade and molested by Gourlay.

Justin Berry, who lives in Bakersfield, Calif., and was the subject of a New York Times profile in December, told the committee that he became the target of online child predators when he was 13, after posting a photo on a webcam exchange in the hope of making friends.

He told the House Energy and Commerce subcommittee that almost immediately, he began receiving requests and offers to pay for him to perform sexual acts online, including those from Gourlay. Over several years, Berry said, he developed multiple sex sites and was molested by adults he met online.

Berry testified that Gourlay convinced him to attend a University of Michigan computer camp and molested him at his home, which was then in Washtenaw County.

"We allege that during the course of these meetings, Kenneth Gourlay got Justin to prostitute himself," Michigan Attorney General Mike Cox said Monday.

Gourlay, who appeared at the congressional hearing, refused to answer a question about whether he molested Berry, citing his Fifth Amendment right to not be compelled to be a witness against himself.

It was not immediately known whether Gourlay had a lawyer representing him.

On Monday, Berry's lawyer, Stephen Ryan of Washington, D.C., said Berry was thrilled by Gourlay's arrest. He said Berry had been in Michigan on Sunday, helping authorities prepare for it.

Gourlay is charged with 10 felonies, including two counts of enticing a child to engage in sexually abusive activity, one count of third-degree criminal sexual conduct and two counts of distributing child sexually abusive material.

Cox said the incidents he is accused of took place from 2001 to 2003.

A preliminary examination is scheduled for May 24.

During his testimony last month, Berry said Gourlay helped him set up a second Web site through his computer processing business, Chain Communications, which was based in Ann Arbor. He also criticized Justice Department officials for not following up on leads he had provided them, including names and credit card numbers from about 1,500 people he said paid to watch child porn on his Web sites.

"Some of those who molested me, like Mr. Gourlay, and who made all of this possible are continuing to live their lives, unaware or uncaring about any governmental inquiry," Berry testified.

Cox said he learned of Berry's accusations after reading the Times report in December and that he immediately began his investigation.

Justice Department officials did not return a call seeking comment Monday.

Gourlay's roommate, Edward Mulak, 23, was arrested last week in Detroit and charged with felony possession of child pornography. Authorities seized 48,000 photos off Mulak's computer, some allegedly of underage boys. Mulak and Gourlay live on West Grand Boulevard.

During his testimony before Congress, Berry said he quit drugs and the pornography business with the help of Times reporter Kurt Eichenwald.

"He asked me for my help in exposing this world, and I agreed," Berry said. "Had I not met Kurt Eichenwald, I would never have had this chance at a new life."

Gourlay was arraigned Monday in 14-A District Court in Washtenaw County and is being held on a \$500,000 cash bond.

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@freepress.com.

Another Arrest in Webcam Pornography Case

By JEREMY W. PETERS
The New York Times

Published: May 16, 2006

DETROIT, May 15 — A 28-year-old computer consultant was arrested here Monday for his suspected involvement in the case of a California teenager who used a Webcam to start his own online pornography business.

The consultant, Ken Gourlay of Detroit, is being held on a \$500,000 cash-only bail and faces 10 felony charges, including criminal sexual conduct, contributing to the delinquency of a minor and distributing child pornography. If convicted, he faces up to 20 years in prison.

The arrest of Mr. Gourlay signals a new front in the government's response to the revelation that minors have been using Webcams to run their own child pornography Web sites, one that could have a crippling effect on this once-burgeoning business.

Justin Berry, now 19, has accused Mr. Gourlay of luring him to Michigan when he was 13, molesting him and setting up a Web site that charged a monthly fee for videos of him performing various sex acts.

In December, a front-page article in The New York Times described Mr. Berry's involvement in the underworld of Webcam child pornography, and the case has generated national interest. Last month, Congress held hearings on the issue.

Mike Cox, the Michigan attorney general, said Monday that after reading the Times article and learning that Mr. Berry had been abused in Michigan, he began investigating Mr. Gourlay.

Last week, law enforcement officials searched Mr. Gourlay's home in Detroit and seized multiple computers. One of them, state officials said, had thousands of pornographic images on it. That computer was owned by Edward Mulak II, 24, Mr. Gourlay's roommate, who was arrested on charges of possessing child pornography, they said.

"It's a parent's worst nightmare," Mr. Cox said. "An adult reaches into a home and pulls the child out."

The Times article on Mr. Berry revealed that at least hundreds of teenagers had created sites similar to his, with help from Web hosting companies that accept a lucrative cut of their revenue in exchange for access to the servers needed to operate the site. That is the service Mr. Berry said was provided to him for some of his earliest sites by Mr. Gourlay and his Web hosting company, Chain Communications.

The action by the Michigan attorney general has made clear that law enforcement officials could view a Web hosting company as being in the business of promoting and distributing child pornography. If such companies refused to provide support to child Webcam sites, most of them would probably vanish.

At the Congressional hearing, Mr. Gourlay took the Fifth Amendment and declined to comment. His lawyer, James C. Howarth, could not be reached on Monday.

Mr. Berry has identified as many as 1,500 men who gave him money and gifts to perform on camera. In January, one of the men, Gregory J. Mitchel of Virginia, pleaded guilty to four felony counts involving the production, sale, distribution and possession of child pornography.

Accused child molester tracked down in Bad Axe

Tuesday, May 16, 2006

By TOM GILCHRIST
BAY CITY TIMES WRITER

BAD AXE - An alleged child molester found Bad Axe a good place to hide, at least until Michigan State Police took him off the streets on Friday afternoon.

Officers arrested 35-year-old Clarence M. Ball Jr. in Bad Axe, and transferred him to Flint where prosecutors arraigned him on four counts of first-degree criminal sexual conduct against a 6-year-old girl.

Ball had been working for months as a floor sweeper at a Bad Axe business, said Detective Sgt. Mark Krebs of the State Police post at Bad Axe in Huron County.

The suspect had been living with a girlfriend in the Village Square Apartments at 60 Cook Drive, Apt. A-6, on the city's East Side, Krebs said.

If convicted of any of the counts of first-degree criminal sexual conduct, Ball could face a maximum sentence of up to life in prison.

About a month ago, the 6-year-old girl told her mother Ball had molested her repeatedly last summer in the city of Flint in Genesee County, police said.

But when troopers looked for Ball at the spot where he'd been staying in the Flint area, he was gone. Police learned the suspect might have moved to Bad Axe to live with a new girlfriend.

Krebs found Ball at the Village Square apartment complex on Thursday and brought him to the Bad Axe post for questioning.

Ball was later arrested after authorities learned about a warrant for his arrest for a traffic offense in Genesee County's Grand Blanc Township. At that point, Ball was transported from Bad Axe to Genesee County.

Ball posted bond on the traffic offense and left the Genesee County Jail before prosecutors issued a warrant for his arrest on the child-molestation charges.

That warrant was later issued and authorities caught up with Ball in Bad Axe again on Friday.

Police said Ball accidentally dropped a novelty "Rebel Driver's License," with a confederate flag printed on it, when he was originally questioned on Thursday at the Bad Axe post.

Krebs obtained a personal cell-phone number from Ball's employer, and telephoned the suspect on Friday to tell him he had left the memento at the post. Ball returned to the post within minutes, and Krebs arrested him. Officers took him back to jail in Flint.

Genesee County District Judge Herman Marable Jr. set bond at \$80,000 cash for Ball, who remained in the Genesee County Jail on Monday awaiting a pre-trial hearing today.

Accused Child Pornographer in Court

By Michael Rosenfield

Web produced by Christine Lasek

May 16, 2006

A Lincoln Park man, accused of possessing child pornography, was in court Tuesday. Investigators are still sifting through all the child pornography, trying to determine who the victims are and where they might be.

The 58-year-old suspect, Randall Raar, has been charged with 12 counts related to child pornography. He appeared in a Lincoln Park court Tuesday.

Raar was recently arrested at his home where investigators seized boxes of child porn videos and weapons. Investigators also found a suspicious room with a steel door, and they are still uncertain what it was used for.

Because of the ongoing investigation, attorneys agreed to delay Tuesday's preliminary exam. Raar acknowledged his wife, who sat in the courtroom during the brief proceedings.

This case has generated lots of publicity because of the amount of child pornography found in his possession, and because Raar was once questioned in the notorious and still unsolved Oakland County Child Killer case from the 1970s.

Investigators told 7 Action News that Raar is not a suspect in that case, but he will likely be questioned again.

Randall Raar worked for the Detroit Newspaper partnership since 1969 as a printer. He was fired 2 weeks ago, when this case first broke.

Couple arrested in child pornography investigation

By CHRIS MACKINDER

Port Huron Times Herald

A 39-year-old male and 24-year-old female were arrested Monday night for the manufacturing and distribution of child pornography and child sexual abuse.

The couple had been under investigation by the Port Huron Police Special Victims Unit and the Marysville Police Department. Port Huron police raided the home in the 3900 block of Military Street Monday night.

Detectives found evidence in the ongoing investigation that at least two children younger than 9 years old had been sexually abused by the couple.

Other evidence found included computer equipment and paraphernalia used to manufacture child pornography.

Both subjects are being held in the St. Clair

Originally published May 16, 2006

Man gets 90 days for scalding

By John Michalak

Daily Tribune Staff Writer

PUBLISHED: May 16, 2006

Man watching boy, who suffered burns in bath water, said it was an accident

PONTIAC -- A Hazel Park man was sentenced to 90 days in jail and a year of probation Monday for the bathtub scalding of a 4-year-old boy who suffered second- and third-degree burns last year.

Before the sentence delivered by retired Oakland County Circuit Judge Richard Kuhn, Donald Ronald Gum told the court the scalding was an "accident," said Oakland County Assistant Prosecuting Attorney Sara Pope Starnes.

A jury last month found Gum, 25, guilty of a lesser, fourth-degree child abuse charge, punishable by up to one year in prison.

Gum had been charged with first-degree child abuse, a 15-year felony.

Starnes had asked Kuhn to sentence Gum to one year in jail, and two years probation.

Gum tested positive for marijuana during a pre-sentence investigation, she said.

Kuhn also gave Gum permission to have telephone contact with the injured boy but no other contact either in writing, electronically, or in person, Starnes said.

Starnes said the boy's mother has said she won't allow Gum to have any contact with her son.

The scalding occurred when Gum was caring for the boy on April 6, 2005, after the mother had left home for work. Gum and the mother resided together with the boy.

The boy testified last month that as he got into the bathtub, Gum left the bathroom. Gum returned to the bathroom because of the boy's screams. Gum told him to sit back down in the bathtub, the boy testified. The boy also said Gum lifted him out of the bathtub and put cold water on his

burns.

Police said the scalding occurred after the boy had a "potty accident."

Bath water should be less than 120 degrees, experts say. Starnes said the bath water temperatures were between 125-155 degrees.

The boy received skin grafts on his legs after portions of his burned skin hung from his legs, reports said.

Police want to charge another Bad Axe parent with child abuse

Tuesday, May 16, 2006

By TOM GILCHRIST
BAY CITY TIMES WRITER

BAD AXE - Three weeks after prosecutors charged a Bad Axe couple with abusing their baby boy, police want another Bad Axe parent charged in a separate case of alleged child abuse.

Detective Sgt. Brian G. Ferguson has asked Huron County prosecutors to charge a parent with first-degree child abuse in connection with a head injury to a 4-month-old boy on March 28 in the city of Bad Axe.

Ferguson, of the Michigan State Police post at Sandusky, declined to say if he wants the baby's 21-year-old father or the child's 20-year-old mother charged with the crime.

But one of the parents intentionally hurt the infant, according to the detective. The child lived with one or more parent in a rented house along West Huron Avenue in Bad Axe, according to county authorities.

If charged with and convicted of first-degree child abuse, the parent could face a maximum sentence of 15 years in prison.

"I'm not going to comment on this particular incident, but from my training and experience, the overwhelming majority of injuries in infant-abuse cases come as a result of inconsolable crying by the child," Ferguson said.

The parents took the injured 4-month-old to Huron Medical Center on March 28 and workers transferred the infant by helicopter to Covenant Medical Center in Saginaw.

The parents cooperated with police during the investigation of the boy's injuries, but they haven't regained custody of the child, Ferguson said.

Ferguson said he asked Huron County Prosecutor Mark J. Gaertner's office last week to charge one of the boy's parents with a crime.

Gaertner could not be reached for comment about the case.

In late April, Gaertner's office charged Ryan and Stardust Welshans each with one count of first-degree child abuse in connection with injuries the couple's 1-month-old son suffered Jan. 5.

Ryan Welshans, 23, and Stardust Welshans, 22, await a May 31 hearing on the evidence. Gaertner said the Welshans' baby suffered severe skull injuries. Police allege the crime occurred at an apartment the couple lived in at 1280 N. VanDyke Road in Huron County's Verona Township, just outside of Bad Axe.

- Tom Gilchrist covers regional news for The Times. He can be reached at (989) 894-9649 or by e-mail at tgilchrist@bc-times.com.

Error still stings despite corrected school worker felony list

GRAND BLANC

THE FLINT JOURNAL FIRST EDITION
Tuesday, May 16, 2006

By Bob Wheaton
bwheaton@flintjournal.com • 810.766.6375

As the state releases a corrected list of school employees with criminal records, Grand Blanc teacher Elizabeth Lemerond is still bitter about her name being included erroneously on an earlier list.

"It was their error, and they went through and did things fairly carelessly," Lemerond said of state officials.

Grand Blanc and Clio are among the districts reporting that they have employees whose names were on the first list but not on the revised list.

Lemerond, a seventh-grade science teacher, was incorrectly identified as having a drug conviction.

"I can't even imagine the embarrassment I would have felt if my name had been put in the paper as a drug dealer," she said. "I don't know how they even came up with that."

The original list - which school districts got in February - contained the names of about 1,500 school employees. The new list has the names of 476 school employees who were convicted of felonies.

Teachers unions went to court and blocked the release of the first list, arguing that it shouldn't be released because of the errors.

State officials have said errors were made when school employees had names that matched those of convicted felons or when Social Security numbers matched because of identity thefts.

"They were so far-fetched in terms of demonstrated professional conduct," said Diane Wilbur, Grand Blanc's personnel director. "You read the names, but you just don't find credibility ... It doesn't fit with who you've employed."

Grand Blanc had three or four employees who were incorrectly on the first list but none on the revised list, Wilbur said.

Lemerond, who ironically teaches health classes that include lessons on how to say no to drugs, said she was listed incorrectly as having a conviction for possession and distribution of a controlled substance. She said she did not know how the state made the error.

She said she's heard of teachers in other districts who were placed on leave for crimes they didn't commit.

"I really give Diane Wilbur and people at central office a great deal of credit that they didn't take it at face value," she said.

Even though district officials concluded the state made an error, Lemerond said she had to prove her innocence to the state.

She said she went to a state police post and got fingerprinted. In March, she said state police sent her a letter saying she had been cleared.

Her only brush with the law was a single speeding ticket, Lemerond said.

In Clio, Superintendent Fay Latture said two employees who were on the first list aren't on the new list. The name of a former employee who has been gone for more than a year remains on the updated list, Latture said.

Flushing Superintendent Barbara Goebel said no district employees were on either list.

The Genesee Intermediate School District hadn't received a list as of Monday afternoon, said Superintendent Thomas Svitkovich.

The Davison School District got its notice from the state Friday, but spokeswoman Michelle Edwards wouldn't comment on whether it had any district employee names on it.

QUICK TAKE

The list

About the state's new list of school employees with criminal records:

☐ HOW MANY NAMES ARE ON THE LIST?

476 statewide.

☐ WILL THE

NAMES BE
MADE
PUBLIC? Yes. A
new state law
says each school
district must
release the
number and
names of
employees on the
list. The law
gives the school
districts 15 days
to verify the
accuracy before
they are required
to release the
information.

□ HOW MUST
SCHOOL
DISTRICT
OFFICIALS
DEAL WITH
EMPLOYEES
WHO ARE ON
THE LIST? The
11 employees
who were
convicted of
sexual offenses
must be fired.
Local boards of
education must
decide whether to
continue to
employ the
remaining 465
employees.

Michigan Report

May 15, 2006

CHILD SUPPORT GOES HIGH TECH

Child support recipients will say goodbye to checks, and hello to a shiny new U.S. Bank Visa debit card – if they wouldn't rather direct deposit instead.

This high-tech next phase of child support is being rolled out to 31 counties in northern and western Michigan this month, bringing the total to 44 counties that account for 40 percent of child support recipients statewide.

The move is expected to save the state more than \$1 million a year in mailing costs, said Marilyn Stephen, director of the Office of Child Support, as well as save parents both time and money.

“The whole postal service (wait) of two days, three days, sometimes even longer is no longer in effect,” Ms. Stephen said. Additionally, she said, the debit cards also act as ATM cards, which usually charge a significantly lower fee to withdraw money than check-cashing stores do.

The program will complete its rollout when Wayne County goes online at the end of the year, Ms. Stephen said.

MC Breed Sentenced To Jail Over Missed Child Support Payments

By Dawn Danz

Date: 5/15/2006 6:32 pm

[/hiphopnews/rss/hiphopnews/rss/](#)

Flint, Michigan's MC Breed has been sentenced to serve a year in state prison for failure to pay over \$200,000 in child support.

On Thursday (May 11), Genesee Circuit Court Judge Richard Yullie ordered 34-year-old MC Breed, whose real name is Eric T. Breed, to prison for violating his probation in lacking to make payments for child support.

Breed pleaded with the Court, saying that he is broke.

"I'm in so much debt right now that it makes my head spin every time I think about it," Breed said.

The judge however, showed no mercy for Breed's plea of being broke claiming that records show that his case dragged on for an extensive amount of time.

Yullie also noted that Breed had previously pleaded guilty in the fall of 1999 to attempted no support.

"Someone looking at this file would ask me why did I give Mr. Breed so many opportunities?... You have not met your obligations you have in respect to supporting these children."

Before being sentenced by Judge Yullie, Breed faced another judge for a separate child support case.

Genesee Circuit Judge Archie Hayman also sentenced Breed to serve a year in confinement in the county jail, with the provision that he can participate in the work release program if he could find a job.

But Judge Yullie's judgment to a year in prison without the work release program supercedes Judge Hayman's ruling.

Before Judge Yullie rendered a judgment, Breed apologized for all of his "inconsistencies" and said that he'd given up on his pursuits of the rap game.

Additionally, the rapper also had outstanding warrants in the Detroit area for failing to pay a speeding ticket and operating a vehicle with a suspended license.

But these extra penalties were waived since he was heading to prison.

EDITORIAL

THE NEW YORK TIMES

Published: May 16, 2006

Extending the Medicare Deadline

Now that the chaotic sign-up period for the new Medicare drug program is over, it surely makes sense to extend the deadline to allow more people to join and to avoid the penalty for lateness. That would be fair to the large number of elderly Americans who have been mystified by the program's complicated design or misled by confusing instructions during the initial registration period. It would also probably help strengthen the financial underpinnings of the program by giving healthy people, whose premiums help subsidize the sick, another chance to sign up without penalty.

The initial sign-up period ended at midnight last night, and the next scheduled enrollment period runs from mid-November to the end of the year. But those who sign up then — except for the poor and Katrina evacuees — will be penalized with a permanent premium increase that amounts to 7 percent of the average national premium. If they procrastinate beyond that, they will face additional increases of 1 percent a month, or 12 percent per year, for as long as they don't sign up. Meanwhile, of course, they will not have this drug coverage.

Little more than a month ago, this page argued that it was premature to consider extending the deadline then because it was serving as a useful prod to force fence sitters to make a decision. But that prod has expired, and some prospective enrollees may now view the penalty as a disincentive to join late this year. It would seem useful to establish another deadline to serve as another prod.

At a minimum, Congress ought to waive the penalties for anyone who signs up in the next enrollment period. The program got off to a horrendous start, with shockingly few counselors to handle the clogged telephone lines and repeated computer problems that lost people's names or assigned applicants to unsuitable plans. It is also enormously complicated. Most people were faced with dozens of plans to choose from and were uncertain about how to pick one. Through no fault of their own, many elderly Americans were too confused to enroll.

In fairness, they should be given more time to make up their minds without incurring a penalty. This should be an easy sell politically. It has bipartisan support and is endorsed by patient advocates and health insurers.

More controversial is whether to extend the enrollment period so everyone, not just the poor, can keep signing up for the rest of this year. That won't sit well with many insurers, who seek some downtime and want to stabilize their enrollment lists to see how they break down demographically.

But it is the right thing to do for beneficiaries. It would not only give them more time to enroll, but would also allow people who were seduced or dumped into the wrong plans to switch to plans that better fit their health needs.

Final Rush to Make Deadline for Drug Coverage



Don Hooper/Charles/The New York Times

Yvette Mapp answered questions about Medicare benefits at Empire Medical Services in Manhattan on the final day to sign up for prescription drug coverage.

By ROBERT PEAR

Published: May 16, 2006

WASHINGTON, May 15 — After procrastinating for weeks, Medicare beneficiaries flocked to centers for the elderly around the country and made frantic telephone calls to insurers on Monday to beat the deadline for getting prescription drug coverage as the initial enrollment period ended.



Joe Raedle/Getty Images

Mayer Kotlarsky, owner of the Village Pharmacy in Deerfield Beach, Fla., answered questions Monday from Kay Stein about the Medicare drug program on the last day to sign up without facing penalties.

"There seems to be a panic out there right now," said Brian D. Caswell, who runs a pharmacy in Baxter Springs, Kan. "Many of the people who waited this long spend only \$30 a month on drugs, and they're being asked to spend about \$30 a month on premiums for a prescription drug plan."

Carol H. Carter, an insurance counselor at LIFE Senior Services in Tulsa, Okla., said on Monday: "It's pretty crazy around here. We are overwhelmed. We can't help everyone who has called. At the end of the day, there will be some people who do not receive individual help because they waited to the last minute."

The first lady, Laura Bush, and Michael O. Leavitt, the secretary of health and human services, went to a church here to broadcast a final message. "Even if you are not taking any medications, it's really important to go ahead and sign up now," Mrs. Bush said. "As you age, it's likely that you will add medications to your health care."

Mr. Leavitt said the administration opposed an extension of the deadline, and he defended the financial penalty that would be imposed on most people who were eligible now but deferred enrollment to 2007 or later.

Others in the administration and members of Congress from both parties said they supported the idea of waiving the late-enrollment penalty for 2006. The penalty will increase future premiums by 7 percent or more, for an expected surcharge of \$2.50 a month next year.

For months, the Bush administration has been urging insurers to hire additional telephone operators to handle the expected last-minute surge in enrollment. But stark differences were evident at the two biggest Medicare insurers, the UnitedHealth Group and Humana, which together have 45 percent of the market.

Calls to UnitedHealth's toll-free number on Monday were generally answered within two minutes. People calling Humana's line often had to wait more than 30 minutes. (The wait on Medicare's toll-free line often exceeded 15 minutes.)

Medicare officials had told insurers they could accept incomplete applications on Monday, provided they followed up immediately to get the missing information from beneficiaries.

Humana went a step further, telling callers they could "meet enrollment deadline requirements" simply by leaving their names and phone numbers on an answering machine.

"A Humana representative will call you back in the next few days to help you choose your 2006 Medicare prescription drug plan," many callers were told.

At a Medicare forum in Cleveland, Marie L. Grant, 66, said she decided to sign up on Monday in the hope that the new program would save her money. She said she had been spending \$140 a month in co-payments for drugs to treat diabetes, high blood pressure and other ailments.

Why did she wait to the last day? "I never understood the whole mess," said Ms. Grant, a retired nurse. "I got so much mail about this. I just threw it all in the trash. So many stamps they wasted. I didn't understand any of it. I'm so mad. All these different plans."

The Rev. Jesse Jackson, who attended the forum, said he checked with his mother on Monday and found that she had not signed up because the new program was "too

confusing." He said he made sure his mother enrolled. But he said the deadline was "cruel and unnecessary."

Carlos Dupont, 69, was checking his blood pressure on Monday at a pharmacy in North Miami Beach, Fla., when he was asked about the drug benefit.

"I have been putting it off because I wanted to get information," Mr. Dupont said. "I am really angry that I have to register for something that should be automatic, and I think there shouldn't be a deadline, and I think the penalty is outrageous."

Sherry Whitman, an insurance counselor who serves the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, said people had three basic reasons for not enrolling. Some have health insurance from a former employer and do not need Medicare drug benefits, Ms. Whitman said.

"Some have no health problems, don't take any prescriptions and want to take their chances," she said. "Others don't want to be bothered. The new program is too complicated for them."

Joanne Addison, an insurance counselor who has advised scores of Medicare beneficiaries in San Francisco, said: "They procrastinated only because they were confused and frightened. They simply did not know or understand what was required of them."

Mrs. Bush pointed out that poor people could sign up for drug coverage after the Monday deadline if they qualified for low-income subsidies.

Christopher Maag contributed reporting from Cleveland for this article, Carolyn Marshall from San Francisco and Andrea Zarate from Miami.

OAKLAND COUNTY

Seniors try to beat deadline on Medicare

Next enrollment period is in fall

May 16, 2006

BY KIM NORRIS

FREE PRESS STAFF WRITER

Throughout the nation and across the state Monday, people eligible for the new Medicare prescription drug program scrambled to meet the midnight deadline for enrollment. Insurance companies and advocacy groups devoted to assisting Medicare beneficiaries reported seeing steady streams of people.

"We've seen a steady, exponential increase in volume since the beginning of May," said Louanne Bakk, director of access and benefits assistance for the Area Agency on Aging 1B, which serves six southeast Michigan counties. The organization has been educating seniors and helping them sign up electronically through the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid.

Bakk was pressed into service Monday to handle a phone volume that exceeded 1,000 calls, 700 of them related to the Medicare Part D benefit. Typically, the agency receives about 250 calls a day.

As of May 7, there were about 6 million people nationwide and 400,000 Michiganders who were eligible but who had not signed up for the Medicare-sponsored drug benefit. Most insurance companies were staying open later Monday night. Humana, which had representatives Monday at five local Wal-Marts and one Sam's Club, planned to keep the Howell Wal-Mart staffed until midnight.

Sal Faycurry, southeast Michigan sales manager for Humana's Medicare products, said he would see how much demand there was at the other stores before making a decision about how long to staff them. Macomb Township residents Mazie Collins and her husband, Robert, were among those looking to sign up for a new plan. Mazie Collins, 65, arrived at the Southfield offices of Blue Care Network late Monday afternoon to pick up an application for her husband.

When asked how the process of selecting a plan had been, she sighed in exasperation and said she had been investigating options since she'd first heard about it last year.

"You start researching and then you get confused and aggravated and push it aside for another day and then you pick it up again and everybody tells you something different and it's really confusing," she said.

Things were further complicated when Robert, 71, who took one medication for high blood pressure, was diagnosed with lung cancer in December. His surgery and chemo treatments have yielded a positive prognosis but they pushed all other considerations out of Mazie Collins' mind for a while.

Collins, who takes no medication, has coverage through another health insurer, but she realized the Blue Care plan was better and cheaper for her and so she planned to switch.

"It's all about money," she said.

Beneficiaries who missed the deadline cannot enroll again until Nov. 15, with coverage starting in January 2007. Unless the government grants a waiver, they will be penalized 1% per month in higher premiums. People who enroll by January will pay 7% more -- or about \$2.50 more per month. People who miss that deadline and don't enroll till November of next year will pay 19% more.

The deadline does not apply to low-income people and people who are eligible for both Medicare and Medicaid.

Contact KIM NORRIS at 248-351-5186 or norris@freepress.com.

Seniors could get a break on Medicare

By KERRY YOUNG
AND ROGER RUNNINGEN
BLOOMBERG NEWS

■ Scramble to meet deadline. 1B

WASHINGTON — The Bush administration left the door open to waiving penalties for elderly Americans who missed Monday's deadline for enrolling in a new U.S. drug benefit plan.

"I'm not going to give you a categorical answer," White House spokesman Tony Snow said Monday when asked whether President George W. Bush would eliminate penalties for people who failed to sign up for the Medicare coverage before midnight.

Based on the most recent figures from Medicare, the federal health plan for elderly and disabled people, as many as 2.7 million people may have to pay extra — and wait until November to enroll — unless they bought a federally subsidized plan as of Monday.

During the last several weeks, many of those Americans called hotlines and appeared at help centers for advice on how to choose among dozens of competing plans run by private insurance compa-

nies. The \$58 billion-a-year benefit started Jan. 1.

Under the drug plan, Medicare covers the bulk of prescription medicine costs, and consumers pay an average premium of about \$25 a month.

U.S. Rep. Nancy Johnson, R-Conn., chairwoman of the Ways and Means subcommittee in charge of Medicare, is expected to introduce a bill to eliminate the penalty.

When the program started, advocates for elderly people and members of Congress complained that it failed several hundred thousand people, including nursing-home patients and those with serious mental illnesses.

About 37 million of the 43 million people eligible for Medicare have some form of drug coverage, either through stand-alone drug plans, Medicare Advantage, private or federal retirement plans, the Veterans Affairs Department or union plans. Some also have coverage through Medicaid, the federal-state program for poor people.

[<<Back](#)



Seniors deal with Medicare Part D deadline

Updated: May 12, 2006, 07:57 PM EDT

By [PATRICK CENTER](#)

GRAND RAPIDS -- Forty-three million senior citizens are eligible for Medicare Part D, yet the government estimates some six million have yet to enroll.

There are complaints that the system is too confusing. That may explain why those six million seniors have waited until the last minute. The deadline is Monday at midnight.

Jo Murphy of the Area Agency on Aging of Western Michigan told 24 Hour News 8 that the number of calls for help have increased this past week. "Every help line is just jammed right now," he said.

Seven volunteers will man the phones this weekend to help seniors select prescription drug plans and enroll them in Medicare Part D.

"You may be needing to wait 30 minutes or longer, but that's the reality of waiting until the last week," added Murphy.

As the clock ticks down to the May 15 deadline, 24 Hour News 8 set out to find ways to make enrolling easier. There are four courses of action you can take. First, call Medicare at 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227).

"They can still get enrolled if they're, you know, in the waiting line at midnight on May 15, to get signed up," Murphy explained.

By going to the Web site www.medicare.gov, you can list your medications, and then a computer program will help narrow down your choices.

Officials also recommend dropping your application in the mail. It will be processed as long as it is postmarked by May 15.

We also found a number of walk-in centers around West Michigan. Most pharmacies and drug plan providers are offering assistance if you stop in. That is what we did at Priority Health in Grand Rapids. We asked what advantages there are by utilizing a walk-in center.

"People can come in, sit down and meet with one of our experts, and just get all their questions answered one-on-one," said LouAnn Shawver, Priority Health's Manager of Medicare Sales. "And pretty much leave knowing that they've been taken care of and are on the right track."

We've learned from both Shawver and Murphy that the enrollment process will go smoothly if you have your Medicare Card and ID number handy, along with a complete list of the drugs and dosage you take.

Keep in mind, not everyone needs to enroll. We're learning many seniors are unaware they are exempt from the program, such as those who get their drugs from the Veterans Administration or receive employer coverage. Examples of employer plan coverage include: retired school personnel, federal employees or General Motors retirees.

For anyone applying for financial help through the Social Security Administration, if you're approved, you can enroll after May 15. For anyone else who misses the deadline, Medicare enrollment for 2007 begins November 15.

Medicare jitters? Just wait until fall

Tuesday, May 16, 2006

By Kyla King
The Grand Rapids Press

With Monday's deadline passed for seniors to enroll in a Medicare prescription drug plan or face penalties, local advocates for the elderly say the next hurdle is getting folks to understand they have to revisit the program each year.

"A lot of people are suffering under the illusion that this was a one-time event, that they were signing up for life," said Jo Murphy, program development coordinator for the Area Agency on Aging of Western Michigan. "This is a once-a-year thing. ... The plan they chose for this year might not be the best plan for next year ... this is never going away."

Murphy said seniors need to get used to reviewing options during open enrollment periods that will begin each November and wrap up in December before prescription coverage takes effect the following year.

The new plans are the result of Congress passing the nation's first prescription coverage under Medicare, with dozens of private insurance companies providing benefits.

There are 18 companies offering a combined 40 plans to Michigan's 1.5 million beneficiaries, 850,000 of whom did not have credible drug coverage when the first enrollment period began last fall.

On Monday, state advocates estimated as many as 250,000 Medicare beneficiaries in Michigan still are without drug coverage and could benefit from signing up for a plan.

"We did the best we could. I'm proud of what our volunteers do," said Mary Johnson, director of the Michigan Medicare/Medicaid Assistance Program. "We reached out and did marketing in every fashion we could."

Johnson said her agency held 50,000 counseling events and partnered with local pharmacies and doctors.

West Michigan's Murphy -- who ran numerous sessions locally -- said volunteers at the Area Agency spent Monday on the phone with seniors.

"We're kind of mopping up the people we have started (helping)," Murphy said. "New, first-timers we are referring to the Medicare number."

At Senior Neighbors in Grand Rapids, prescription program coordinator Kathy Gruizenga said she was surprised at how few phone calls came in Monday.

"We've just enrolled a few new people," Gruizenga said. "We're mainly just answering questions from people who have already signed up for a plan and are just nervous."

Send e-mail to the author: kking@grpress.com

Home to hundreds

Published Monday, May 15, 2006 11:50:00 AM Central Time

By DIANE MONTZ

Ironwood Daily Globe Staff Writer

BESSEMER TOWNSHIP -- Mary Bauer has mothered more than 100 children since 1974 when she and her husband Joe took in their first foster child.

"Mary's a great mother," Joe Bauer said Thursday.

They have two birth children and seven adopted children ranging in age from three to 33. The youngest, 3-year-old Richard, has lived with the Bauers since he was 3 months old -- they adopted him just two weeks ago.

"I married a woman that wanted 12 kids," Joe said.

An only adopted child of parents who themselves were only children, Joe was 27 when he married Mary -- and he didn't want children.

"My wife wanted children very desperately," he said.

'We Wanted to be Parents'

The Bauers got into foster care in Lansing after looking into adoption.

"We wanted to be parents. We were not having any luck," Joe said.

One Friday, as they were heading out to eat, a caseworker knocked on their door. She asked if they'd be foster parents.

They asked how much time they had to decide.

"45 seconds," Joe said, smiling years later as he told the story. The 18-month-old girl stayed with them for three months.

A few months later, they took in another toddler, Trudi. She was the first child they adopted.

"Once we had Trudi, you do that whole switch in your life," Joe said.

The young family moved to Bessemer in 1977. Joe worked for what is now the Department of Human Services. They moved into a big two-story house on Summit Avenue.

Their daughter Anjanette was born in 1978. When Mary was pregnant with their second child,

Stephanie, born in 1982, they dropped out of foster care.

Within a year or two, they were recruited back.

"We were pretty selective when the children were very young," Joe said.

They're licensed as a six-bed home, with four permanent beds for children who could stay from birth to age 18 and two shelter beds for children to stay less than 30 days.

A long dining room table with three leaves accommodates 10 chairs with room to spare. A jungle tent full of toys faces shelves full of children's books. The front porch is filled with outdoor toys.

A Different Avenue

When the Bessemer school bus stopped at the Bauer home in Anvil Location Thursday afternoon, two Bauer teens and three younger foster children got off.

Leaving a pile of wet shoes in the foyer, they piled into the living room. A freckle-faced redhead asked for a cookie.

"Some kids want to be here. Most of them don't," Joe said.

Some children arrive without deep anger and settle in. Others are already involved with the legal system. Some are deeply hurt and say hurtful things to get a response.

Some stay for a day. Some arrive at 2 a.m. Some don't want to leave.

"Every kid should have an opportunity. I'm not saying Mary and I offer the best opportunity," Joe said, describing what they offer children as a look at "a different avenue."

Foster care offers a time-out for families while parents attempt to get a grip on their life, he said.

The Bauers try to be on a first-name, friendly basis with birth parents.

They make the foster children a part of their family, attending their Little League games and taking them along on family vacations.

When it's time, they let the children go home to their natural families -- even the reluctant children.

Joe Bauer tells them, "Your natural family is healing. You need to go back. That's your family."

'A Very Different Family'

In the late 1980s, the Bauers adopted three siblings who had come to them as foster children under age 5.

"They were only going to spend the day," Mary said.

In December 2004, they adopted two more foster children, a teenaged brother and sister. Earlier this month, they adopted Richard, a chatty, high energy strawberry blonde.

"We didn't ever think we'd have a 3-year-old at this age," Mary said with a laugh.

Over the years, they hosted 13 foreign exchange students. Most came from small families and didn't know what to make of the large, ever-changing Bauer household.

"This is a very different family," Joe said.

Some have returned, bringing their families to visit in summer.

The Bauers have three grandchildren, ages 5, 3 and newborn. They are the children of the oldest Bauer daughter, Trudi.

In a family photo taken last summer, the Bauers smile, surrounded by children, grandchildren, foster children, former foreign exchange students and their families.

Joe Bauer, recalling that he once didn't want children, said, "I can't imagine a life without children."

Advice Squad

Foster parents deserve support for rescuing kids

Dear Abby: May is National Foster Care Month, a time when we celebrate the thousands of foster care parents who play vital role in helping children, youth and families in crisis to heal. The commitment of these families leaves an indelible mark. They are helping to end cycles of physical abuse, neglect and substance abuse, often enabling a child to be the first in his or her family to go to college.

An example of this commitment and advocacy is a foster parent named Corinne, who, in spite of almost overwhelming odds during Hurricane Katrina, kept her three foster children together in shelters until they could settle in a new home.

We hope that your readers will join the National Foster Parent Association in showing appreciation and support for every foster parent — especially during May. While not everyone can be a foster parent, everyone can support foster care.

— Karen Jorgensen,
Executive Director National Foster Parent Association

Dear Karen: Thank you for pointing that out. There are many ways we can lend support and influence the lives of young people who — through no fault of their own — are in the foster care sys-



DEAR ABBY
Jeanne Phillips

tem. Readers can:

- Donate goods, suitcases, books, games, computers, sports equipment, musical instruments, clothing and school supplies to young people in foster care.

- Learn about how policy, legislative and budget priorities affect children and youth in foster care.

- Mentor a young person. Research shows that children and youth with mentors earn higher grades and improve their relationships with friends and families.

- Help young people in foster care organize a youth leadership or support group.

- Send "care packages" to foster care alumni attending college, and/or become a "virtual" mentor for a young person in college by lending emotional support as an e-mail/online pen pal.

- Become a foster or adoptive

parent. Caring families are especially needed for older youth, siblings and children with special needs.

- Explore how your organization or business can encourage people in your community, or your employees, to become involved.

- Support affordable housing options for young people making the transition from foster care — a critical time in their lives.

- Become a licensed respite care provider as a way of providing support to foster parents in your neighborhood.

- Become a Court-Appointed Special Advocate. CASA volunteers are trained citizens appointed by judges to represent the best interests of abused and neglected children.

- Recognize and honor a foster parent in your community. Write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper in praise of someone who is making a difference in the life of a child in foster care.

Visit www.fostercaremonth.org — an excellent Web site — to learn more about how each of us can make a difference and change a life.

Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

05/16/2006

Officials: Deputy threatened to kill wife

He allegedly pulled gun on her while on duty

BY IAN C. STOREY
istorey@record-eagle.com

AND CRAIG MCCOOL
mccoolrecordeagle@sbcglobal.net

TRAVERSE CITY — An on-duty Antrim County sheriff's deputy allegedly pulled his service handgun on his estranged wife and threatened to kill her and the couple's children unless she stopped divorce proceedings.

Michael Harvey, a six-year department veteran, was arraigned Monday on two counts of felonious assault before 86th District Court Judge James R. McCormick. The alleged assault occurred at the couple's Central Lake home Saturday, authorities said.

Antrim County Prosecutor Charles Koop said Harvey was on duty when he went to the house at 10 p.m. and allegedly argued with his wife over divorce proceedings she'd initiated.

Koop said Harvey, 34, allegedly pushed his wife to the ground and struck her in the face. As the argument escalated, Harvey allegedly pointed his handgun at his wife and threatened to kill her.

"I will kill you, your mother and then myself," Harvey allegedly told his wife, according to police reports. "You need to stop the attorney, stop the divorce, and stop everything."

Koop said the argument spilled into the home, where in front of the couple's children Harvey allegedly pointed his gun again and made additional threats.

"If I get the (expletive) papers in the mail, I am going to (expletive) kill you and your mother, and I'm going to kill these two boys and then I am going to kill myself," Harvey said, according to police reports.

During the altercation, county dispatch officials contacted Harvey about a criminal complaint and he left the house, Koop said.

Koop said Harvey's wife drove to the Michigan State Police post in Cadillac to report the incident. She feared her husband would have been able to monitor a local call to emergency officials, he said.

"He got off at midnight and it was reported to the Cadillac post," said Koop. "The post contacted the (Kalkaska) post and he was arrested."

Harvey was arrested around 6 a.m. Sunday at his residence without incident, Koop said.

Douglas Gutscher, an attorney with the Police Officers Association of Michigan, asked McCormick to reduce the \$500,000 bond set for Harvey, who will remain in the Grand Traverse County Jail.

"These are simply allegations of a person in the middle of a divorce," he said. "The allegations are serious, but that is all they are now."

Koop told McCormick the alleged threat was not an isolated incident, referencing other allegations of threats in recent months that Harvey made to his wife.

"In an interview with the defendant yesterday he indicated that not only did he threaten his wife (in the past), but also took his duty Taser and pointed it during this time period at his two-year-old son," said Koop.

Koop said 57 firearms, both loaded and unloaded, were confiscated from Harvey's home.

McCormick did not lower the bond.

He also ordered Harvey to have no contact with his wife, children, her family or any witnesses if he is freed.

"If true, this is a major threat of injury or perhaps even fatal injury to the alleged victim," said McCormick. "I don't think the court wants to risk being responsible for the defendant being out on the street."

Harvey, who faces up to four years in prison, is scheduled for a preliminary examination in Antrim County on May 25.

Koop said he will ask that a special prosecutor be appointed because a member of his staff may be a witness in the case.

The task will likely fall to Grand Traverse County prosecutor's office, which had representatives present during Harvey's arraignment.

Michigan Report

May 15, 2006

WELFARE REFORMS ON DECK FOR HOUSE ACTION

The House will take up a supplemental appropriations bill this week that would put into place welfare reforms including implementation of a 48-month lifetime limit, stricter sanctions and advanced assessment of able-bodied adults.

The supplemental, HB 4309, was voted out of the full Appropriations Committee on straight party-line votes.

The plan is to also take up HB 5633, which would dedicate English as the official language of the state and designate that state agencies are not required to provide documents in other languages, but those agencies and local units of government could provide those documents if they so choose.

Timing of the vote on the bill would come after President George W. Bush addresses the nation Monday in a televised speech regarding immigration reforms. Polling by the Market Resource Group in March showed that 75 percent of respondents support the bill, with 11 percent opposed. There were 600 people surveyed with an error rate of plus or minus 4.1 percent.

The chamber also plans to finish up concurrences in Senate bills named after Jessica Lunsford – the Florida girl who was raped and killed in 2005. The package would put stricter punishments in place for adults who sexually assault children and place the criminals on lifetime electronic monitoring tethers. The bills are HB 5421, HB 5422, HB 5531, HB 5532 and HB 5533.

Detroit Free Press

May 16, 2006

DETROIT: Fund-raising dinner to honor retiring leader

Tickets still are available for a fund-raising dinner Wednesday honoring Ted Lewis, who is retiring after 31 years of leadership at the Children's Center.

Under Lewis' direction, the nonprofit agency in Detroit has grown from three programs with 300 clients in 1974 to 20 programs serving thousands of children and families.

Programs include foster care and mental health counseling for children who have lost a parent or sibling to violence.

Debora Matthews succeeded Lewis as chief executive officer of the center in February.

The event begins at 5:30 p.m. at the Detroit Athletic Club. Tickets are \$100 each and can be obtained by calling 313-262-1112 anytime.